

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Rebecca Kaopuiki Richardson

"We don't know. We just looking and watching what's going to happen, that's the thing. It's not something to do with the hotel, but it's just that [there is] nothing so you can tell this used to be the ranch. Nothing. Nothing to show. No fence, no more all the old things. At least if they had something to remember by, then you would know."

A lifelong resident of Lāna'i, Rebecca Kaopuiki Richardson was born at Kahalepalaoa. Her family moved to Ka'a and then to Keomuku, where her father, Daniel Kaopuiki, Sr. was employed by the Lāna'i Ranch. Daniel, a caretaker for ranch operations in Keomuku, maintained the windmills located in the area. He also operated a small fishing boat, often taking supplies and passengers to Lahaina, Maui and back. Rebecca's mother was Hattie Kaenaokalani Kaopuiki of Lāna'i.

Rebecca attended Keomuku School through the sixth grade. In 1930, she moved up to Kō'e'e to live with her brothers. As the oldest girl of thirteen children, Rebecca did her siblings' laundry and performed other household tasks. Her parents remained in Keomuku until 1952, when the ranch's closing forced them to move to Lāna'i City. Daniel eventually became the pastor for Ka Lanakila O Ka Mālamalama Ho'omana O Ioredane Hou Church in Lāna'i City.

Rebecca worked briefly as a maid at Lāna'i Inn before marrying ranch cowboy Ernest S. Richardson in 1932 and raising seven children. In 1956, she began working as a field worker for Hawaiian Pineapple Company.

She and Ernest still live in Kō'e'e in one of the two remaining structures on what was once Lāna'i Ranch.

Tape No. 16-2-1-88

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Rebecca Kaopuiki Richardson (RR)

April 9, 1988

Kō'ele, Lāna'i

BY: Mina Morita (MM)

MM: This is an interview with Rebecca Richardson for the Kō'ele oral history project, on April 9, 1988 at Kō'ele, Lāna'i. The interviewer is Mina Morita.

Okay, Mama, just start by giving us your full name.

RR: Rebecca Kaopuiki Richardson.

MM: You have a middle name?

RR: Yeah, Hawaiian name is Lepeka.

MM: Yeah, okay. And then, when were you born?

RR: May the 20th, 1914.

MM: Okay. Where were you born?

RR: At Kahalepalaoa.

MM: Lāna'i?

RR: Lāna'i.

MM: And then, Tūtū Papa's name?

RR: Daniel Kaniaia Timothy Kaopuiki, Senior.

MM: And Tūtū Mama's name?

RR: Hattie Holuhua Kaenaokalani [Kaopuiki].

MM: Give us all the names of your brothers and sisters from the oldest to the youngest.

RR: Even the one died, yeah?

MM: Yeah.

RR: The oldest one is Daniel Jr., Jerry, then me, Rebecca, then Lei, then Billy, that's William, and then Sol, then come Alex, then Isaac, then Junior, and then--in between, I think was miscarriage, you know, so I don't know their name. Then came Sam, Samuel, and then Harriet, then another brother.

MM: Johnny.

RR: Johnny, but he died. And then came Eva.

MM: And then, what kind of job did Tūtū Papa do?

RR: At the first beginning, the time when the [Maunalei] Sugar [Company] all [closed], they didn't have job, but they would go fishing and maybe get firewood from Maui. And then charcoal, they cutting that, I think, that's the living they had. Then afterward, they work for [George] Munro for the ranch. But then the plantation closed already [in 1901], the sugar plantation.

MM: Did he work for [Charles] Gay, too?

RR: Well, maybe when Gay was still running [the ranch], maybe [between 1902 and 1910], yeah? Not too much but. Only when they need somebody, then he go part-time, not every day. But [for] Munro, I think, he worked. Then no more, then he go fishing to keep, you know, the family. That's all I know, but I don't know if he had work before that.

MM: When he worked for Munro, what kind of work did he do?

RR: Take care cattle or help him with the cattle, with the water, with the windmill. Do all that.

MM: Was he the one that put up the windmill?

RR: No, no, no. He only worked when the windmill stay operating. I think that was [put up] by Cockett, Robert Cockett. And then everybody, all of the workers, go help put up. Then after everything up, then only my father go take care. When no more wind, then he turn off the windmill for no spin and so no broke. That's what he do.

MM: And then--he had a boat, too?

RR: Yeah. Only the small kind (fishing) boat for go get food for us.

MM: From Lahaina side?

RR: Yeah. From Keōmuku go Lahaina. The boat name was Seamen. My Uncle Noa Akamai, the boat name. They go fishing, whatever they catch, they take for sell.

MM: Sell in Lahaina?

RR: In Lahaina, to the markets over there. Then they buy gasoline for their boat and buy poi or whatever, you know, things from there. Most like cracker, flour, and they buy it by the bags. Those days are so cheap everything, so then, 'nough for all, everybody, yeah?

MM: And then they bring back the kaukau to Keōmuku?

RR: Yeah, they bring back Keōmuku. That's all they do. Most time it's fishing, you know. Then we get into planting watermelon. When time for harvest the watermelon, they take 'em out.

MM: You folks grow the watermelon on your property?

RR: Yeah, at Maunalei, but. Not Keōmuku or Kahalepalaoa, no. It's up Maunalei side. He own the farm there.

MM: But you were born at Kahalepalaoa?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: And so you had a house over there?

RR: Yeah. We stayed in the warehouse that [once] belonged to the [sugar] plantation. That's where we stayed.

MM: At Kahalepalaoa?

RR: At Kahalepalaoa.

MM: And then later on, you folks moved to Keōmuku?

RR: No. We move up to Ka'a. My grandmother owned a place up there. They built a little house, then we moved there. Then we stayed there until Robert Cockett wen like somebody to take care [the windmills], then we [Kaopuiki family] moved to Keōmuku town.

MM: About how old were you when you moved to Keōmuku town?

RR: Oh, I was old enough already, I was up here already [living at Kō'ele]. I came up here and go down. Maybe was sixteen [in 1930]. Then I came up [to Kō'ele]. [RR lived in Kō'ele with siblings, while her parents remained in Keōmuku.]

MM: So you grew up in Ka'a then?

RR: Yeah, mostly in Ka'a.

MM: And then, how about Tūtū Mama? What kind of work did she do?

RR: Oh, take care the family, go fishing, do all the house job. Not any other kind job. Weaving, mostly lau hala weaving, hats, fan. She

do most of the kind weaving for mat with my grandmother. People like mat, they make mat. People come and they give them.

MM: Did they make the mats for Lāna'i people or people from off island?

RR: Was not exactly from Lāna'i, but mostly it was for our boss. When this second boss came.

MM: That's [Ernest] Vredenburg?

RR: Yeah, when Vredenburg came [as ranch manager in 1935]. They make the big whole mat for the whole parlor, then they come up, they do 'em. Then after pau and then we take 'em back, the afternoon. For home kind use, they make plenty. And then, when Maui has county fair, then they make.

MM: Oh, and they take it to Maui?

RR: Yeah. They take 'em just like to display. Like our school in Keomuku, what we do over there, we take 'em Maui. And then the Maui guys see it, if they like 'em, they buy, see. And what money they give, then they send back to the [Keomuku] School.

MM: Was Lāna'i mats different from the kind mats they had on Maui?

RR: Depends. Certain guys they make certain ways, certain Lāna'i. But my mother and my grandma, only them two most times they make mat or fan or hat. Most time they make and then people see, and they ask. So just for display. When they take their display over there, then the people see, they tell they like buy 'em. And then they ask, they say up to you, how much. Those days they no care. First they tell, they no sell. They like give you something, so they give. I know when the fan was--every time when they like the fan--like us, we all make, too. Then we go get the kukui nut. You know the kukui nut? We take 'em, we bring home, we shine 'em up, then we cut 'em half make just like for tie. You know, necktie kind. Then we put on a ribbon. And then, you know, when the people see, they like and they buy the whole thing. Those days they like give you one dollar one. You know, nobody squawk. They tell it's not for sale, they send over there for display like exhibition like that. But the people see, they like, so they buy.

MM: Tell us about Keomuku School. I mean, there was only one school down Keomuku?

RR: Yeah, only one school. I think before our days, maybe [one] school used to be [in] Pālāwai. Way in the back. But, like us only down there, only Keomuku.

MM: And then, so, how old were you when you started school?

RR: Six. I think I was seven when I went. Then they took us, the class. Only one class because only one teacher.

MM: Who was the teacher?

RR: That Mary Fitzsimmons [a.k.a. Mary Kauhane, Mary Kauila].

MM: Fitzsimmons.

RR: Yeah, before she married. After her husband died--I think they buried her husband over here in Lāna'i, you know, down there someplace. So I don't know. I think, you know, they wen bury him someplace.

MM: So she was a widow?

RR: Then she was a widow. But our family, she pick [on] everybody. After school, you got to go get lau hala for her. She gave my aunty good licking with the yard ruler, I think. That's how she got dropped from school. Then she went back Maui.

MM: Oh, so, how long did she teach, though?

RR: Yeah, I no remember how long she was, you know. Then afterwards, we got one lady by the name I remember, [Emma] Kelso. And then afterwards one Japanese, then we had--the Japanese man, I forgot what his name. Then we had one Haole teacher, Miss [Evelyn M.] Drummond her name. Then I pau. I never go school again. She left. Yeah, she was getting old, so she wen go. Then the last one Japanese guy. Afterwards then, you know, later, Uncle Sol them gotta come here [Kō'eie] for school.

MM: They closed down Keōmuku school [in 1929]?

RR: They never close right away. I think the teacher was sick. He went Maui then he went doctor then they told him cannot come back for teach anymore. So from that wen close down.

MM: When did Keōmuku School start?

RR: That, I don't know. Maybe wen start long time [ago] because had all Auntie Maggie [Nakihei Kauwenaole] them, was all the Makahanaloa [family], my cousin, must be before us. Maybe early, about nineteen-something, so I don't know. [Keōmuku School started in 1902 and closed in 1929.]

MM: Okay. So, where was the school located?

RR: Right at Keōmuku town.

MM: [Near] the [Ka Lanakila O Ka Mālamalama] Church?

RR: Oh, far. You know where the greenhouse where we stay by the kahawai [dry steam bed]? You know the kahawai, the greenhouse? Now, still standing, yeah, that house. This is Gay, this house over here. And get that kahawai going down. Get Gay house over here, right over

here, the school stay. Right there. Used to have one coconut tree and then the school right there. That was the big old school, was one whole house. The teachers get to stay inside there and take only one room for the class. Then one room, then make for shut. Then over here is bedroom for the teachers. Get one, two, three bedroom, I think. Then the kitchen everything behind that. But when they wen broke down, then only one building. Get the office, everything inside.

MM: When did they break the building down?

RR: I don't remember what year, but then had the school itself, then the teachers' cottage one side. With two bedroom, had kitchen, parlor . . .

MM: So, they broke down the old school and rebuilt . . .

RR: They rebuilt another school. [The teachers' cottage was in the same location as the old school.]

MM: About how old were you, you think, when that happened? Were you going to school?

RR: Yeah. Oh, I was in the fifth grade already.

MM: Oh, okay.

RR: That's why I tell you, that Miss Drummond, I do the cooking for her.

MM: When you were in the fifth grade?

RR: Yeah. I go over there. She going get guests come, then she tell me go there for do the cooking for her. I used to cook, make soup, go clean up. If they going come before eleven o'clock, then ten-thirty I gotta go do all that. She tell me what and what to do, then I go do all that, cooking for her. Most time they like Haole-kind pancake, the small kind. Make out of scratch, not from the box kind. That's how we make.

MM: Did somebody help you or all by yourself?

RR: No, by myself.

MM: How come she picked you to do it?

RR: Because every time she know, us, we come to school, that's what we bring for lunch. We always bring pancake or something like that. And she go taste and she said to me, "You go try," and then she ask me for cook for her, try. So I go make for her, she like it. Then when the guests come, that's when she send me go, go cook that kind.

MM: What kind of people used to come and visit?

RR: That's school kind superintendent like--I think his name was Mr. Murphy, I think. He used to come--and somebody else too, you know, used to come and visit there. Maybe twice or three times a month, guests come from Maui.

MM: They come by boat?

RR: Yeah. They come up here [Kō'e] first. By the time they reach over there [Keōmuku], almost to lunch hour, they ride horse come down. Then when they pau, before two o'clock, they leave there, then they come here [Kō'e]. I don't know how they go home. Maybe stay next day and then go.

MM: And they leave from Mānele side?

RR: Yeah. They leave Mānele, that's the only time. That time, the [Kaumalapau] Harbor, never have. They used to come. That's the last for that teacher, I work for her.

MM: So what was your typical school day like?

RR: Nothing much. Well, I like math 'cause more easy those days. Easy kind, yeah?

MM: How did your school day start off, what did you folks do?

RR: First thing in the morning is, you come, usually we pull flag . . .

MM: About what time you start?

RR: Eight o'clock. So we used to leave home, Ka'a, about seven o'clock or quarter to 'cause only easy walk, yeah?

MM: Yeah. You walk about--how far is that, you had to walk?

RR: I don't know. From Ka'a to Keōmuku for the school. I don't know how many.

MM: How many of you used to go walk together?

RR: Oh, all us with Helen, you know, Helen . . .

MM: Onuma?

RR: Yeah. Her and the sister, and the other Japanese girl, all us. All us, everybody go their own. But us girls or most of us, Auntie Lei them we all want to go together. And we go.

MM: And then when you get to school, eight o'clock, what do you do?

RR: Well, we had to wait outside, then when the bell ring then everybody go salute the flag, mostly that's one you pledge allegiance to the flag. Then after that, then you say the Lord's Prayer, then start

school.

MM: And then--so, everybody was in one class . . .

RR: In one class, in one class.

MM: And did she separate you by age?

RR: Yeah, yeah. They go separate if you, maybe, first grade stay here, second grade, third grade stay here. By then, all my cousins all no stay already, all left already, all go back Maui.

MM: So, about how many--usually how many kids in the classroom?

RR: That time only had just about fifteen, I think, of us. Then one by one the family leave, then come down to less, so, pau, they stop. But Uncle Sol them [RR's younger brother, Sol Kaopuiki], from this side [Kō'ele] go school. Send them up here, but they was staying with my [older] brother Jerry, and he was with [hānai brother] Kimo Roberts. So bumbai, afterward, only us, we stay by my mother. We stay Keomuku, then my uncle tell, "Hey, you only stay home work, work, work."

I tell, "No, weekend I gotta come [Kō'ele] get the clothes, take home [Ka'a] for wash 'em." Take them home and come pick them up, go down, pick them up, go down, wash and come back, bring home their laundry. That's what I was doing all that time. (Going back and forth between Ka'a and Kō'ele.)

Then my father's younger brother tell me, "Yeah, hard job, this kind you go up [to Kō'ele], come down [to Ka'a]."

I say, "Well, you stay, you can help me."

He tell me, "No, I go stay little bit while." Then he tell no more job, so he was going away. He came, they made him feel home up here where we stay. He stayed about one week, then he tell me he going Honolulu, so he went.

MM: Who was that now?

RR: My uncle, Naauao, John Naauao [Kaopuiki].

MM: I see. And then--now after school, when school pau, what did you folks do?

RR: Oh, we got to go home, we gotta work. Get pig for take care. We got to go get firewood. Then if have something to wash, got to wash clothes.

MM: How did you folks wash your clothes?

RR: Inside the tub. Carry water from the well. On the stone. That's

how we do, we wash clothes. Mostly me the one gotta do, 'cause me the oldest one [girl]. I gotta do all that. Then other young [siblings] they gotta stay home help cook, clean up. But the washing, most time me. Not my mother. That's what we do. Most time everybody get job to do. You gotta do this, maybe you gotta go get firewood, you gotta take care--you gotta feed the pig, you gotta go feed the chicken and all that. Everybody get [job], all my brothers, everybody.

MM: What else kind of kaukau did you have around the house?

RR: Well, we never did get rice, you know, those days. I know we had only flour, taro . . .

MM: You grew your own taro?

RR: No. We gotta go buy from Maui.

MM: How come didn't have taro down there?

RR: Not enough to give everybody, so had to go Maui. So they bring home . . .

MM: But they had taro down there, Keōmuku side?

RR: Yeah. Down--not Keōmuku, but . . .

MM: I mean, by Maunalei?

RR: By Maunalei.

MM: So, some people used to keep up there?

RR: Yeah. The Apiki family used to take care the water over there and they used to plant. Those days, you go fishing, you get taro, you trade. What I get, I give you; what you get, you give me. That's how they would give, those days. So, my father them gotta go Maui and buy the taro by the bag, then come home. Cook your own, then pound, we pound our own, make poi out of that.

MM: Who used to make the poi?

RR: My father them, all aunty them. Then us kids we like go fool around too, huh? So we go learn, huh? Put little bit, then show you how to pound, you know. But mostly it's them, they do all.

MM: Did you have a garden, too? Any kind vegetable garden?

RR: No. You know what we live on? It's potato leaf.

MM: Sweet potato?

RR: (RR nods.) And then, one other weed that they call--stay growing

around and that's all.

MM: But the sweet potato leaf, you use it like taro leaf?

RR: Yeah, with anything. They call that palula. Cook with anything. That's how we were brought up. No more any kind vegetable. No such a thing as carrots or beans or lettuce or what. But mostly it's from the sweet potato. But get--like I said, get plenty weeds and then certain weeds, they can use that for [cooking].

MM: Now which kind weeds, now?

RR: I don't know if anybody know.

MM: You know the Hawaiian name?

RR: Yeah. One is pakai and one is--get two more other ones. They go get and then keep the leaf, clean 'em, then you cook 'em and you eat 'em.

MM: You remember the name?

RR: That's what I said, one is pakai [used like spinach], and the other one is. . . . Something like--well, anyway, the Koreans used that, too, for make kim chee. Da kine koli flower, koli leaf. What you call that? Not the--yeah, I think you call castor, yeah.

MM: Castor?

RR: Yeah.

MM: Like the castor bean?

RR: Yeah. That leaf, the young leaf, they take that and they boil it. I don't know, maybe it's some other Hawaiian name, but I don't know. But the Koreans used that one, make kimchee, too. And all da kine weeds they think can eat, they make that. That's how we live. We no more this kind like carrots and all that kind.

MM: Well, what else? You had pig, you had chicken, you had . . .

RR: Ducks.

MM: . . . sweet potato, you had different kind of weeds, you said, and then you had watermelon patch?

RR: Yeah. Watermelon, we plant watermelon, they plant corn, and we get all that.

MM: They sell the corn, too?

RR: No, mostly only for us eat, the family eat kind. Only the watermelon, yeah, they sell because plenty, eh? We had to take Maui

and sell, the market like, too. So they take 'em Maui.

MM: Any other kind vegetables?

RR: No. Not that I know of, that's all I know.

MM: Okay. Who used to take care all the sweet potato and stuff?

RR: Each one--every one of us.

MM: The kids?

RR: Yeah. The kids, everybody. Everybody go. We eat and then we put in the pan for open the sweet potato, everybody open. Then we plant, we go.

MM: What kind fish you folks used to eat?

RR: Oh, all the different kind. Get manini, we get kala, we had weke, we had enenue, what, nehu, and turtle, and all that kind. Even the small kind, those days no more game warden, can eat all the small kind, pua, 'oama, mullet, all that kind. All that small kind fish we used to catch. 'Opae--those days, how easy for catch 'opae. You don't have to go struggle. You only make the stone. We harvested the 'opae and when time for go eat, you just take off the stone, catch your 'opae then leave back again the stone. That's their house. So no run away.

MM: Oh, but, 'opae is freshwater kind, huh?

RR: No, seawater kind. Not freshwater. Sea kind. Those days, plenty. But today, I don't know, I don't know if get. I no think so, but I no go down long time, I don't know.

MM: So you folks used to eat fish almost every day?

RR: Every day, that's what we eat. We have to go, get--with the net and go, like that.

MM: And you catch for the day?

RR: Everybody. Then us--all the family, like Aunty Martha [Kaopuiki Kane] them, and all everybody together, eat something. They just put the mat down, put all da kine, everybody bring. Everybody together.

MM: All eat together?

RR: All eat together. And when you make party, that's how.

MM: But you folks used to do that every day?

RR: Every day. That's only us, family. Only morning time when

everybody at home. In the morning everybody get their own. When come to lunch hour, then, everybody call.

MM: Except when you're at school?

RR: When at the school, then no. Everybody stay home their own house. But most time, all together, one family. That's why everybody say, "Gee, I think the Kaopuiki family, the Makahanaloa family, the Kane family, and the Apiki family, and the Mano family, and the Kahooalahala family, everybody get together." But most times, it's holiday time or Sunday after church, then everybody together, eat together. Everybody, just get what you have. Like I said, most time, sometime no more, we cook what we call pitale, we call monkey bread, and feed everybody. That's what everybody had.

MM: When no more fish or something like that?

RR: Yeah. Usually get because the guys went fishing the day before, Saturday or sometimes Sunday morning, they go early. Whatever they catch (we eat). Then go church. After church, then everybody together.

MM: What about--didn't have fish ponds down there, Ka'a side?

RR: Had, but not the regular kind. That's the kind sea kind, that you go inside there. No more this kind regular fish pond that you keep fish inside. The only place had, I think, was Naha side, I think was Lopa side. But let the seawater come in. But the other place, they have, but it's not--it's just da kine . . .

MM: You folks don't use it?

RR: No. That kind, just everybody go kind. Just get your own sea kind.

MM: How about limu and stuff?

RR: Yeah.

MM: Go get limu?

RR: Each one, whoever can go get, they go get. Those days only near, we no need go too far. Just go outside and you pick up and come, everybody. Our days was like that, everybody together. But when everybody go away then, left only us [living in Ka'a]. And then--oh, Uncle Noa [Kaopuiki] them and then my aunty got sick and they took 'em Maui and she stayed there until she died. So, he no more job so he went, he left, and then only us.

MM: So, where you folks live down Ka'a, was just all the Kaopuikis, Makahanaloa, the Kanes, Mano . . .

RR: No, up by where we stay Ka'a, was only us, the Kaopuikis, was Tūtū Papa and Uncle Noa house over here. But the Makahanaloa family was

staying with us because no more job, huh? They no more place for stay. The Mano [family] was staying at Keomuku town by that church. They have house, but then, you know, certain guys. But this family, they no go stay there, they stay with us until they-- Makahanaloa--until they left Lana'i.

MM: Right where you folks live, were there any Japanese families over there, too?

RR: No. They all was up here [Kō'ele]. But they come, you know, ride horses, come when they work, then they come. Most times it's only [Susumu] Nishimura. And had one other Japanese, too, was living there.

MM: Down at Keomuku?

RR: Yeah. What his name? Nishiyama--not Nishiyama. Nishimura--no. Ho, I forget his name already, I always pronounce that. But we call him Matsuyama. Everybody know him by Matsuyama.

MM: Matsuyama?

RR: Mm hmm. But he died, that man died, afterward he died. He own one boat, too. Small just like Tutu them boat.

MM: Okay. I'm getting confused. But didn't you say Mrs. Onuma's family used to live down there?

RR: Yeah, they was living down there.

MM: But far from Ka'a?

RR: Yeah, far from Ka'a. They stay at [Keomuku]. But that's where Nishimura staying over there, the mother was staying with somebody. Actually, Nishimura didn't want to come up here. But the mother left the father. And then, as I said, [she] stayed [in Keomuku]. Then Mrs. Onuma, Helen Onuma. Tamura, yeah, the last name, the father? "Murata" the first name. [According to Helen Onuma, her father's name was Ichiro Tamura. He claimed the Hawaiians called him "Murata" because it was easier to pronounce.] Used to be the honey man, the honeybee man, he take care all that. So their house was right in the--you wouldn't know the name, the place. And then--it's kind of far from us. Maybe [the same distance] from over here [Kō'ele] to the [Lāna'i] City, I think, where they live.

MM: About two miles, then.

RR: About from here to the city. Then they come over here. And had one other family, I forget their last name. Anyway, those guys used to take care watermelon, any kind, they make, the Japanese. Then they started to plant their garden. That's how they started plant cabbage, you know, this Japanese family.

MM: I can get the name later. So, then you folks used to go to Keōmuku on Sundays to go to [Ka Lanakila O Ka Mālamalama] Church?

RR: Yeah, from Ka'a.

MM: From Ka'a. And then who used to be in charge of the church?

RR: Nobody. Just the members. But our minister is Alexander George, but we go by his Hawaiian name, Alika. Alexander George, he's the blind man and our minister.

MM: About when did he come to Lāna'i?

RR: He live in Moloka'i and he used to come here, come down Lāna'i.

MM: Oh, he didn't used to live here?

RR: No. He only come and stay. Maybe he can stay over here three, four months, then he go home. Then he come back, then he stay, then he go back Moloka'i, and then he come back. So he used to come, he stayed with my aunty, the one Uncle Noa, we call--used to stay there. But do his laundry, my mother do the laundry. Then bumbai the Cocketts stay down Keomuku side, and then he go stay there, so near for the church, huh? 'Cause up here, we had to walk with him, but he can walk. I mean, blind, only you gotta hold his hand, lead him and he go with his ko'oko'o [cane]. We used to walk go. Then the Cocketts wen stay down there until he was transferred up here, then that's when we wen move Keomuku. We took my father for go over there for take care.

MM: About how old--oh, you said you were about, what, sixteen, when you moved to [Kō'e]le?

RR: Yeah, mm hmm.

MM: And let's see, but when this George, the minister, when he was gone, who used to take care the church?

RR: Tūtū Man Kauila. Kauila.

MM: James Kauila?

RR: Yeah. Then they come down every time, go down, every Sunday.

MM: And he used to preach?

RR: Yeah, mm hmm. He used to come preach down there until--then every time rain, rough, you know, down there. Then the [Hawaiian Pineapple] Company used to lend [a building]. [Dexter] "Blue" Fraser was the manager [succeeding Harold Blomfield-Brown in 1936]. [Prior to that], Tūtū Man used to hold [services] inside his house. You know the house where the Moritas wen stay. We used to hold in there.

MM: Kauila?

RR: Yeah. Then Mr. Fraser gave, what you call, you know where the Baptist stay now?

MM: The [Lāna'i] Baptist Church [in Lāna'i City]?

RR: Yeah. That's where we used to go.

MM: Oh, the one right above the [present Lāna'i High and Elementary] School?

RR: Yeah. Right above the school. Then they give us that until Fraser retired [in the 1950s] when we wen go. Then, what his name [W. W.] Aldrich?

MM: Aldrich, yeah.

RR: He came [i.e., Aldrich succeeded Fraser as Lāna'i Plantation superintendent in the 1950s], then. . . . But before Fraser went, he gave that church now where we get, that hall. Used to be for the American Legion, I think, was. Then he turned 'em over. So the American Legion had one down by where the Langworthy house is now. You know that big one down there?

MM: Yeah.

RR: So they had that one, so they gave this one [the present 5th Street location]. This one supposed to be for them and the [Boy] Scouts, I think. And before Fraser went, he give to Tutu Papa this. So when Aldrich come, he made paper, black and white, that the church go to him because of his helping for the company. Tutu go help him.

MM: You mean, do the blessings and stuff?

RR: All da kine, whenever the company need him help, then, you know, go do all these things. That's why, when Fraser went, he told him, now, so this one he made paper, black and white. Say, as long as Tutu Papa stay here, or whoever, can have this church at the end. You know, nobody stay. That's why we have that paper till today.

MM: So, had the church in Keōmuku [Ka Lanakila O Ka Mālamalama Church] and then also, [Charles] Gay had a church [Lāna'ihale Church], too, right?

RR: Yeah. When they left, afterward the company wen take over for a while.

MM: The company being Lāna'i Ranch, took over?

RR: No.

MM: Or the pineapple?

RR: Hawaiian Pine. Was under Hawaiian Pine that time. So, I don't know what happened and then the church was just standing like that, yeah? But nobody come. That was, how you tell in English? That was Kalawina [Congregational] church, huh? That's where your [MM's] grandmother [Grace Hagemann] belong. And your grandma used to belong that church, Kalawina. That was just like Christian Union church, huh? In Hawaiian it's Kalawina. And in English . . .

MM: But my grandma was Catholic.

RR: No. She told me she was da kine [Congregational] before she went to be a Catholic. She said after, she went to be Catholic. But before that she was at Kalawina or maybe her family was Kalawina and she tell me she was Kalawina. That's why she know plenty about this kind church work in Hawaiian way, then she went to Catholic. Then she said when she went to Catholic, they don't teach them like how they had learned, you know, from da kine. She told me herself. They said she was a Kalawina, that's why she have Hawaiian Bible and all da kine. And she know all that. Then when she married this guy, maybe she went to Catholic, then she belong to Catholic all [the rest of] her life.

MM: So, after the Gays left, then nobody went to that [Lāna'ihale] Church?

RR: Nobody because the guys no come, huh? So, when [Robert] Cockett build his [Ka Lokahi O Ka Malamalama Ho'omana Na'auao O Hawai'i] Church up here [Kō'eale], then they took all the stuff from that [Lāna'ihale] Church for bring, you know, for . . .

MM: Oh, from Gay's church, they brought it up here?

RR: Up here. All that stuff. But the only thing wrong, yeah, the Catholic down here, came over here ask the company for the bell. That bell belonged to Gays, the two bell they have down there till today.

MM: From Gay's church?

RR: That's from Gay's church, the two bell. But they know, the Gay family know, you know.

MM: How about doctors down Keōmuku side?

RR: No. Only that kind. Mr. and Mrs. [Charles and Louisa] Gay is the doctor.

MM: Uh huh. So if anybody sick, they go to them?

RR: Yeah. They come down [Keōmuku] from up here [Kō'eale]. They use only Hawaiian kind medicine. Most time they use, I don't know what kind, they make weed kind, all the herb kind that they know, then they give for drink, you go clean up all da kine. Oh, so far so

good, but the really bad [cases], then the boat go take them Maui.

MM: Who takes 'em to Maui?

RR: Either Tūtū or the plantation boat take them guys go Maui. But mostly it's Mr. and Mrs. Gay is the doctor for everybody.

MM: But after they left . . .

RR: After they left, everybody go Maui.

MM: How about when time for give birth, who did that?

RR: Either her or get midwife. Most guys, they do home, own family, huh?

MM: Uh huh. Who was the midwife?

RR: Well, most time Tūtū them help each one another. When I had my first baby was Tutu them, nobody else.

MM: Tūtū Mama?

RR: Mm hmm. But only they take the report to Maui to that old hospital in Lahaina side. They take the report over there.

MM: And register?

RR: Yeah. Just like when Cockett was, same thing. He register everything, but gotta go Maui, take 'em to Maui.

MM: He [Cockett] used to handle all the registration for everybody?

RR: For everybody. He used to do that.

MM: Before him, who used to do it?

RR: I don't know. That, I don't know. I never ask. Maybe the Gays, 'cause them the one was, most time, taking care everything, then they had office. But maybe it was Cockett, too, because he had his own office down there, too, and he used to work. So must be him, I don't know. But I know when us, our turn, Tutu them said was, the time when this war [World War II] wen come break out, then we no more. Then they were our witness, that's how we had our first certificate through them.

MM: Through who, now?

RR: Cocketts.

MM: Cocketts.

RR: They were our witness. Just like way before, we were born maybe, he

was taking but they take 'em Maui, see. Got to go through Maui, and then they register over there. But when the war wen break out, then everybody wen stop. So they had this kind . . .

MM: This is World War I?

RR: No, II.

MM: Nineteen twenties or 1940s?

RR: I think '40s, yeah, I think in the '40s, when this one wen broke out again. Then they had this kind guys come from da kine board of health, not board of health, from the--anyway from the board, yeah. Because if you alien or what, all that kind. Used to have two guys come. But when they come make your paper, then you have to pay five dollars for them. So, Cockett, he witness for all us. So that's how we all had our paper. 'Cause our parents no can be because they put 'em up there Lahaina hospital. But when they go find, they cannot find, the papers.

MM: Oh, so he had to redo 'em again?

RR: Yeah. Then Cockett was the witness, you see, 'cause he was the one to take care all of da kine. Then they send 'em to Maui. Then they put all over there the record, but couldn't find, so. But good thing had that guy [Robert Cockett], yeah. Otherwise, everybody no more.

MM: No more papers?

RR: No more papers. Everybody, you know, on Lāna'i. The way behind kind, our year kind. You know our year? But the new ones afterward all had, hospital here, the doctor, so.

MM: Did the doctors ever come over here? Not too much?

RR: No. No more. No more doctors come over here. We had to go Maui, we had to go Maui. Dentist, you had to go Maui, all that. But when they had . . .

MM: How long did it take with the boat from--you used to leave from, what, Kahalepalaoa?

RR: From Keōmuku to Lahaina? Only about nine miles.

MM: Nine miles. About how long does it take?

RR: Oh, depend how fast your boat. If nice weather, maybe about half an hour.

MM: Oh, easy.

RR: Yeah. So you ride boat, more easy. But you can tell when nice,

clear day, you can see when the boat come home, you no see the boat go [up and] down like this, it's all clear.

MM: Did Tūtū Papa used to use a sail or the motor?

RR: Way before their days maybe they used only sail. No such a thing as motor until they own this kind boat with motor. Their days, no more. Used to all da kine sail with you paddle kind, those days. But afterward, they get the motor kind, yeah?

MM: About when did he have a motor?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

RR: Maybe before, maybe before us, I think, before us, they had.

MM: So he got a motor for the boat just about when you were born?

RR: No. Maybe before we were born. When I came, they already had it, I think. They already had.

MM: How about--besides church, what else did you folks used to do?

RR: Nothing. Everybody got to work. Got to go get firewood, got to do this, got to do that.

MM: Okay. You know when somebody make, how did they handle it?

RR: Oh, they make their own coffin, and then they bury.

MM: The family make their own?

RR: Yeah, they make their own. 'Cause those days no more nobody. When you go buy da kine, cost money. So they buy either get black material or--outside, they make black material then inside they put white, then get sheet or something, and then they put that. That's all. And they all buried the same place down there.

MM: Where was the cemetery?

RR: Stay, you know where all the church standing up?

MM: Mm hmm.

RR: Stay right in the back.

MM: I see.

RR: Right in front here. Above the hill behind here, just you go over

the hill. That's how far.

MM: So they used to have everything inside the church or at the person's house?

RR: In the church. If not in the church, they put in the person's house, then the day before they go inside, in the church.

MM: But they used to bury 'em right away?

RR: Yeah, right away. They no leave, you know. But if in the evening one, they leave [until] morning time, then between ten o'clock or eleven o'clock, then they take 'em, bury.

MM: How about when you was a small girl, was there any different kind burials, Hawaiian, not Christian kind?

RR: Most is all Christian kind that I remember. They always, you know, say prayers and sing, yeah, I remember when I was small.

MM: How old were you when you came up to live at Kō'elee?

RR: When I came over here, I was about [sixteen], I think, that year [1930]. Just made [sixteen], I think, stay up here with my brothers.

MM: Uh huh. And so you used to take care the house for them while they went school?

RR: Mm hmm. One go school, my other brother go work.

MM: Is that Jerry?

RR: Jerry. And Kimo Roberts go work and then I take care wash, cook for them, and take care my brothers go school.

MM: Where was the house in Kō'elee?

RR: Way down there, you know where Daddy wen take you go show the last time, right by that corner. Right by that--see the lime tree in front there?

MM: By the Norfolk pine?

RR: No, no. The Norfolk pine is where Sam Shin them used to stay. From the church straight now where the banyan tree is. You know the big banyan tree?

MM: Uh huh, yeah.

RR: Maybe about two feet away, stay right in the corner. Right over there, that house. And then, that's where we stay. I stay with my brothers. Then the next was Oliva and in the front was Sam Shin's

father [Bon Soon Shin], then [Gi Hong] Kwon, and then this side was the Nakiheis wen stay, and then Tutu Man [James Kauila] them stay inside one other house over here. Then the Cocketts wen stay in the front there, and then the Japanese, [Morikazu] Kawano, used to stay over here. And [Henry] Gibson used to stay way up the other house.

MM: Yeah. How big was the house you folks lived--that first house?

RR: Oh, big kind. It's the kind--not like this built kind.

MM: It's not like the . . .

RR: Not like this type.

MM: . . . this Miki house [i.e., RR's home, brought up to Kō'ele in 1937 from Miki Camp, and demolished in 1988]?

RR: No, not like--this is Miki house. Those days da kine house, just like long, huh? Get parlor long like this, one bedroom over here, one bedroom over here, then the kitchen. See, the way they make, long like this. Over here going be the parlor, this is the kitchen, the kitchen long too. And right over here, get one bedroom and one bedroom behind here.

MM: So, what, they had two bedrooms and a parlor?

RR: Yeah. And then the kitchen is long, longer than this.

MM: Mm hmm. And then what kind stove and stuff did you have in the kitchen?

RR: Oh, kerosene.

MM: Kerosene?

RR: Those days all kerosene.

MM: Oh, I'm surprised. Didn't have wood burning?

RR: No. No more. Only us Keōmuku, get wood. Up here [Kō'ele] is all kerosene.

MM: And then, so, what did Jim Roberts, Kimo Roberts do?

RR: Work for the ranch, cowboy, same thing. And then my brother them, all of them.

MM: Jerry?

RR: Yeah.

MM: Jerry was a cowboy, too?

RR: Mm hmm, mm hmm. All them.

MM: How long did you live in that house before you married?

RR: About a year, then I marry to Daddy [in 1932].

MM: Mm hmm. And then did you stay in the house after you got married?

RR: We stayed there only about for a week, I think, then we move to the house up here.

MM: Next to [Simeon] Kauakahi?

RR: No. Right here to this house.

MM: Oh, where . . .

RR: This house, right next the house. Was empty till the boss told Daddy. The house where he lives only they wen go come clean up everything, so we stayed down there with my brother until, you know, pau everything, then we go move out.

MM: Okay, and how big was that house?

RR: Oh, two bedroom.

MM: Same size?

RR: No.

MM: Smaller?

RR: Maybe smaller. Only the parlor was bigger. But, see, they add one house behind for the bathhouse and one more room. But the room, maybe they wen make for them, I think, for Abraham them for their own, yeah. And inside the bedroom, they give to the--whoever come, yeah, for them to stay behind and the bathroom and everything.

MM: So had like a little cottage in the back, then?

RR: No, it's joined together with the house and they just lived in together. Then over here get hallway for you go outside, go to the back, to the toilet.

MM: So who was living in that house, then, with you folks?

RR: Before?

MM: No, with you folks?

RR: Nobody. Only my brothers. After my brother Jerry, then the ranch [started to] close down, then Kimo gotta go work Hawaiian Pine. So we all move inside here together. They all came stay with me. All

my brothers.

MM: That was what year, then?

RR: When we had this house was 1937.

MM: When you moved into this house?

RR: Yeah.

MM: The Miki house?

RR: Yeah, yeah. Thirty-seven, that's the one we had with [electric] light and everything. Then my brothers all stayed with me. Everybody, Jim Roberts all from here they go work. They go down the city work.

MM: In the old house?

RR: Over here, this house.

MM: When the Miki house, too?

RR: Yeah, this house, we stay. But my brother Jerry went Honolulu and go find job over there, so he work for the stevedores, so he stayed there.

MM: So what, he went . . .

RR: Only Uncle Willy and Uncle Sol, Uncle Alex stayed with me, and Kimo.

MM: Oh, so, what happened, then, they lay off people from the ranch and that's why they didn't have job?

RR: Yeah. And no more place to stay, eh? Yeah, when they lay off, no more.

MM: How come they laid off people?

RR: Because they don't know if this new boss like the same people. You know when the new boss come in?

MM: When [Ernest] Vredenburg came in [as ranch manager in 1935]?

RR: Yeah, when he come in. So they don't know if he like them. So, they had to work for Hawaiian Pine.

MM: Uh huh. So when Vredenburg came in, he kept Daddy [i.e., Ernest Richardson]?

RR: Yeah. Well, he picked who he like, then afterward they pick up somebody who they think can work. They pick up from the city, see, the guys there. But like Uncle Bill [Kauwenaole], well, he was

still working, too, but he get family so he go pick up, yeah. So when they bought all house, then Uncle Bill them had, you know. And when the ranch wen close, then Uncle Bill them wen start buying. That's when the [Hawaiian Pineapple] Company wen start to sell homes to the employees [beginning in 1954]. And that's why they bought their house all down the city.

MM: Oh, Uncle Bill Kauwenaole?

RR: Yeah, all those guys. Used to hire somebody from outside go come over here work. Like [Ernest] "Beef" Keliikuli, when he came over here, his brother-in-law, every time come visit him. So they ask if they like work, but they said, nah, nah, they no like, so they work for the company, for Hawaiian Pine. But like them, they no like stay long. They only come stay little while, yeah. Maybe enough for them, then they go, you know.

MM: So, when you first moved up here, who were the people living up in Ko'elee?

RR: Mostly the Nakihei, the Oliva, the Kwons, the Shin, and So, and Kawano, the Japanese, but afterward they moved. Not long. When I came, when we stayed, then just before we got married, then he left.

MM: And then Kauakahi?

RR: Then Kauakahi stay, then the Gibsons left because they no go take them old people go work already, eh, so he left. Then he got sick, I think, [Henry] Gibson. Then pau, only the old lady wen stay but stay with the Kauakahi, with the two grandchildren, stayed there. Then the kids went--I think when they come seventh grade, I think. Then they went Honolulu for a while, then they came back again stay here until the old man, Kauakahi died. Then the old lady [Matilda Gibson] stay little bit while, then no stay. The parents of the two girls told them, might as well come home stay Honolulu so the two girls can go continue school. They wen wait till she graduate, then they went. Then Marlene had to go school, yet, I think one more year. Then, you know, they wen move, then they left her, Mrs. Gibson. Actually, Mrs. Gibson, that's Betty Lou, their own real grandmother. Their father's mother. But when they left, Mrs. Kauakahi take the two girls just like that's her own, you know.

MM: Hānai kind?

RR: Yeah, hānai kind. So when these two girls wen move, she went with the two girls, stay Honolulu. So they left this old lady. 'Cause the boy said, no sense bring the mother, so the mother stayed. So Auntie Hannah them [John Richardson family] felt sorry, so they wen move for take care her in that house.

MM: And then--so that's during Munro time, all those people work?

RR: Yeah, all those--no, Kauakahi was still working for Vredenberg too

until he died. Then they all went, after, the wife went with the two girls.

MM: What year did Vredenburg come?

RR: Thirty-five, I think, when he came.

MM: And when he came, who came with him?

RR: Only the one [Kuniichi] Sakamoto.

MM: Sakamoto?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: But didn't have some of their cowboys from the Big Island, too?

RR: Had da kine, Keliikuli had, and Lincoln. And what Japanese guy was staying there? Not Kimura--almost pronounce like Kimura, but I think is Okumura, I think, and they came. And Lindsay--they never work long time for him.

MM: And then who's the Lāna'i people that worked for him [Vredenburg]?

RR: Only Daddy [Ernest Richardson], Bill Kauwenaole, Johnny Boy [Richardson], then--what you call, Uncle Biggie [Junior Kaopuiki] wen work, and Sam Kanahele, and. . . . Uncle Sammy [Kaopuiki] wen work little while, and. . . .

MM: We could come back to that. When you first moved up to the ranch, and, you know, your brothers were going to school, you folks were kind of nearby to the office and the store, yeah?

RR: That company one?

MM: Yeah. No, the ranch one, yeah.

RR: The ranch one.

MM: What kind of stuff did they have in the store?

RR: Oh, most canned goods, like corned beef, salmon, and da kine, the one with the sardines, you know, the round kind in the can?

MM: Yeah.

RR: That kind and mostly flour, sugar, and rice.

MM: Is that where you used to get your stuff from?

RR: Well, them, yeah. For us, as long as you work for the ranch, that's where you get your . . .

- MM: So because Kimo Roberts and your brother worked for the ranch, so you could go there?
- RR: Yeah. And then they give them. They the one. I no go, them the one go.
- MM: Oh, so they go pick up?
- RR: Yeah. Maybe today, if they go store, then they tell me, oh, yeah, you come, this is for you, they call. That's how they make.
- MM: So you didn't have to pay for the stuff?
- RR: No. I don't have to because I think they take care them in those days. Those days, they take care. Then after Vredenburg came in, then we gotta go store [in Lāna'i City]. No more, pau already.
- MM: They did away with the ranch store?
- RR: Yeah, uh huh.
- MM: So then you had to go down to Lāna'i City?
- RR: Store, mm hmm.
- MM: But when--with the ranch store . . .
- RR: They get twice a week, you know, for give them.
- MM: How about rice and poi and stuff like that?
- RR: Poi, if they order, then get, then they tell you today maybe it's your poi day, maybe. Other than that, most is can goods that they get. Then you get your meat from the slaughterhouse.
- MM: They give you so much a week or something?
- RR: Yeah. So much a week, that's all. But like Daddy them, they give 'em all the inside, you know, all that kind.
- MM: Yeah. So where you folks used to keep the kaukau so no spoil?
- RR: In the safe. We no more icebox. It's all in the safe like that, you pile up and all that kind. But most time, you put salt so no spoil. But most we keep in the safe like that. That's why we used to have, one house used to have two this kind [safe].
- MM: Every house had two?
- RR: Yeah, mm hmm. They like and they get one, and then the other guy like, and then they make one more. So most guys had two, you know. Us had two, but we took one Keomuku to Tutu them. So this the only one stay till now.

MM: Who built this one?

RR: I wonder if the Japanese--the guy that work for the ranch or what. I don't know. So we still have ours.

MM: So this safe you have in your kitchen is how old?

RR: I don't know. Ever since we move [to] our own house we had this.

MM: So must be about, what, 1930. . . .

RR: Maybe somebody had one before that and gave 'em to Daddy, that I don't know.

MM: Oh, so when you got it, it wasn't brand-new?

RR: No, was. Was brand-new but . . .

MM: Wasn't that old?

RR: Yeah. Wasn't that old.

MM: When was the last time you changed the screen?

RR: I never.

MM: That's the original screen? It's nice.

RR: Whenever, take 'em outside, wash 'em.

MM: Uh huh, uh huh.

RR: Take 'em outside, shoot water, wash 'em. And so you look, some place stay green. Old already.

MM: But the wood is still nice.

RR: Yeah, the wood . . .

MM: It doesn't look termite-eaten.

RR: No. So far, so good. So we don't know.

MM: So, how often--you used to get meat every week?

RR: I think twice a week, I think. Just twice.

MM: They slaughter the . . .

RR: Yeah.

MM: . . . the cattle?

RR: Mm hmm. Well, cattle, they slaughter every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, used to be only for the stores.

MM: For Lāna'i stores?

RR: Oh, yeah, for the stores.

MM: How about pigs and stuff like that?

RR: All same thing, all same. If they get Monday, they get Monday; if they get Wednesday, they get Wednesday; and Friday. All for the stores. But used to be only Pine Isle [Market] and Richard's [Shopping Center] and da kine, the International--no, not International, [D. R.] Rabbon [Lāna'i City Store], then until International [Food and Clothing Center] came up. We used to have those three stores.

MM: So during the daytime after everybody go school, go work, what did you do?

RR: Most time I stay home do work, I get sewing to do, and then, you know Helen [Tamura] Onuma? The mother [Ayako Tamura] used to live over here, used to come for teach me how to make kimono, Japanese-style kimono. That's why I go learn, then, most times Daddy come home for lunch, so I stay home eat. But most time she come, the old lady come.

MM: For teach you how to make kimono for yourself?

RR: No, learn for the children. 'Cause she make for her children, everything. Even pajamas or da kine, you know. She used to teach me, that's why I know how.

MM: Where did the material come from?

RR: Well, we go by the store and look the material, what kind, then we buy, we come home, then we make.

MM: This is the Lāna'i City stores?

RR: Yeah.

MM: But before the Lāna'i City stores were built, where did you folks get your clothes from and material and stuff?

RR: Maui. Somebody go Maui, then we tell go buy so-and-so, and then they buy. That's how we make ours.

MM: But didn't you work down in Lāna'i City, too?

RR: No. I worked before I married Daddy.

MM: I see.

RR: When I was single, I work for the--well, Hawaiian Pine used to own the Lāna'i Inn [a.k.a. Lāna'i Lodge]. But was underneath the--what you call, not Pine Isle, Yet Lung Store, used to be Yet Lung owned the Pine Isle [Market]. Used to be him. So him the one in charge [of Lāna'i Inn] so he ask me to go work. And those days you make . . .

MM: Uh huh. About what year was that?

RR: Well, we got married in '32, was '30 and '31. Hawaiian Pine owned that Lāna'i Inn [later Lāna'i Lodge]. Was [run] by that Chinese family. 'Cause those days, was only the nurses [staying there] and most the Chinese guys, the Chinese, Japanese . . .

MM: So it was like a boardinghouse or something?

RR: Oh, almost like hotel like this, but, see, the nurse quarter here. The nurse quarter stay here. And this is for the people who come to stay.

MM: Oh, so, one side was for the nurses and the other side was for visitors?

RR: Yeah. Visitors.

MM: And then the dining room was the same place?

RR: The dining room was the same place. And the kitchen same place. Everything same place. So I work with them inside there. Then only two dollar a day.

MM: Two dollars a day?

RR: But the Chinese guy he know Tūtū Papa, that's his store, eh?. So he tell me, "Ah, too cheap, yeah?" I tell, well, I go work seven o'clock, I start, then lunch hour we work when the nurses come eat and all that kind. That's why I meet Mrs. [Kimiko] Nunotani. She worked for the nurses.

MM: I see.

RR: Then me and [Ben] Loui work for the restaurant side.

MM: What did you do? Cook, waitress?

RR: Waitress, I'm waitress. Him the cook. Him with two Chinese guys. So I'm waitress with him and the same time we go clean up room, you know, clean the rooms like that. I help him, that time. That's why, me and him when we was working, we get along, we work together. So I tell him, that's where the man wen chase the wife, I think, kill [her] inside by the heater side. I tell him, "I no like go inside there, the funny feeling."

But he tell me, "Why?"

I tell, "Ho, funny feeling. You the one tell da kine story, so, you think no scared?"

He said, "Nah, nah," so he come with me. Then he get one mop and I get one mop . . .

MM: There was a murder over there?

RR: Yeah, it was a murder in there.

MM: When did that happen?

RR: Maybe about three or four months before I wen start work in there. And then he tell me, "Nah, no scared."

"No way I going inside there."

He tell, "No more nothing."

He go with the mop this side and I come with the mop this side. I tell him, "You the one tell me the man chase the lady and cut the lady right over here. You tell me that da kine story, you think I going inside there? Hoo, you think no scared." Well, those days, what you call, a shower not like now. The shower more close, eh, close kind . . .

MM: Smaller?

RR: Smaller, you know. Then right over there the bedroom you come go inside. 'Cause I tell him, "Ho, no." I tell.

He tell, "You funny girl, scared."

I tell, "Sure."

Bumbai he tell, he was in the kitchen when they heard a noise, but the lady wen run, through from behind the kitchen. So they thought they can block the man, see, the Filipino man. But they no can block 'em because the man came. But the real husband for this lady is one Okinawan man. So the Filipino man like this lady, that's why they were fighting. I think she and the husband were fighting, I think. But this lady like go back to her own husband, but the Filipino man like her, so wen chase.

MM: But didn't have that many crimes like that murder . . .

RR: I think this Okinawan man was so mad with the--well, he kind of old and the wife kind of young. Him so mad, I think, that's why he chase 'em, cut 'em. And the Filipino man wanted this lady, too, so two guys like. But she was pregnant at the same time, that's why more worse. Then afterward, then no more, I no feel funny, so. But

actually that's my job, I supposed to go do because I gotta go clean up and all da kine. But, no, because he tell the story, I no like go inside. Take him go with me.

But the Chinese guy, the regular boss over there, he tell me, "How you like?"

I tell, "Not bad. It's not heavy, only the mop heavy." They get da kine big, old-style mop, eh? Then you got to put this side for go rinse the water, yeah. Heavy you know, that thing. And then I tell him, "No, it's not that kind."

But he tell me, "I going hold you some more because, I think this guys going move. And then I go hold you again. Going stay some more for work some time?"

"Okay."

So I stay. Then in pau hana time, then, he tell me you go come get me, bring you home. I thinking humbug, so I tell, "No need." I tell my brothers. Daddy [Ernest Richardson] them all used to play basketball. So he tell me, "You going pau hana late?"

I tell, "Yeah." I tell Daddy, no need come get me. He used to come meet me, then us come home. But I tell him, no, no need. Then I go tell my two brothers, Uncle Sol or Uncle Alex, "You guys go come. I think Ernest them get game tonight." So they tell oh, okay. So they come over here meet me, then we go down the gym.

MM: Down the gym.

RR: Down the gym, then pau game, we go home.

MM: So is that how you folks used to keep busy, go watch basketball in the evening?

RR: Yeah. Most time we go. Or when if they playing, then they come meet me. If they not playing, then Daddy come meet me, then we come home.

MM: Yeah. What else did you folks used to do to keep busy?

RR: Nothing. We just go and then come home. Then usually we stay by--over there we talk story, then Daddy go because he gotta go work, eh?

MM: Yeah.

RR: Then I got to go work, too . . .

MM: Did you used to go to the movies, too?

RR: Well, if get good movie, then we all go. If not, then we no go.

But most times I hardly go with them in between unless they ask me, then pau hana, then I go with them. But other than that, I no go. Uncle Jerry, sometime he go, sometime he no go. But if good movie, oh, this guys, with dirty clothes, and all.

MM: They go? (Chuckles) All the cowboys?

RR: Yeah, you can hear the spur. Ho boy. At that time, Abraham [Kauila] was the policeman before time. Every time Abraham, the policeman, he make fun. He go come inside the theater, he going come sit down stand next to me and Daddy, and make fun. I tell him, "Ho . . . "

MM: Was he the only policeman?

RR: That time, yeah, that time. But [Thomas] Kruger was the big boss. But him the one, you know, go.

MM: Who was Kruger, now?

RR: That's Mrs. [Katherine] Botelho's father.

MM: Uh huh.

RR: He was the captain for the police.

MM: On Maui or on Lāna'i?

RR: Oh yeah, he stay here.

MM: Oh, so, it was Kruger and Kauila?

RR: Yeah. Abraham was working with Kruger.

MM: And then, so, let me see . . .

RR: Most time, us, only that and we go home, most times. And then if good movie, then Aunty Hannah [Kauila Richardson] like go movie, so we come. Then she tell, then I tell, okay, if I pau hana early, then we go.

MM: So how did you used to get everywhere?

RR: Walk. Us walk, no more car those days. Everybody walk. Daddy them all walk, go basketball and--that's the time they come home early, pau hana, they go early down the gym. Most times, this guys all stay down the gym. Uncle Billy, Daddy, Uncle Lew, Uncle Chester, and all the other guys. All, every time down the gym.

MM: Let's talk more about the ranch area. Only the people that work up in the ranch, lived up here?

RR: Mm hmm. But most times the children from the city come here,

because over here used to have the playground.

MM: There wasn't one down the city?

RR: No more, only up here. So, the kids, most times, the outsiders come. Over here had the playground, had everything, basketball, volleyball, all in the park over here, down there.

MM: Oh, they had lots of stuff?

RR: Everything. Vredenburg made for the ranch kids 'cause plenty kids, eh? Plenty children, everybody have children. So instead of the kids going here, going there, so the kids all coming. So the kids down the city know, they all come up here.

MM: So, at that time, the city wasn't quite built, yet, huh?

RR: No, not. Starting to, but not really. Going little by little. Until they had made that park, you know where the store now?

MM: Mm hmm.

RR: When the thing came in, then. But most times, all the kids was up here, 'cause up here, ranch kids no go down [to the city]. They only stay up here, that's why all them guys come here.

MM: Oh, when [George] Munro was here . . .

RR: No.

MM: No. When you first moved from Keōmuku side up here.

RR: Nothing.

MM: Didn't have stuff like that?

RR: No, no more.

MM: So was it after Vredenburg came, then he built the playground?

RR: Mm hmm. Playground for the kids, he figure, over here we have all our children; instead the children go down, stay here.

MM: Okay. But during Munro's time, did everybody have their own yard?

RR: Yeah.

MM: What did it look like?

RR: Same. You have own yard, but no more like how we have now. The yard is just--the house stay, the yard like that.

MM: No fences or anything?

RR: No, get fence.

MM: Between the houses?

RR: Yeah. But where we stay, no more. No more. Only the fence for the cow for no come into the house, that's all. But the outside like this, no more. You just take care your own yard. And most, eucalyptus and Norfolk pine, that's why, all, in between.

MM: So when Munro was here, did you ever get to go to his house?

RR: No, no. He used to come my house. He come my house every morning.

MM: What for?

RR: He go walking, he go walking just to come check me up and my children. Every morning.

MM: Your children, meaning your brothers?

RR: No, my babies.

MM: No, this is [George] Munro time?

RR: Yeah, Munro. [After Munro retired as ranch manager in 1935.]

MM: Oh.

RR: I had my first one, yeah.

MM: Ernest?

RR: Yeah. He used to come every morning. He go with his workers--maybe Daddy, they no need work, maybe today they get all their cows inside. He go walking, he go up and then, when he come back, he come from through the back here. Come down here and go to my house. Every morning.

MM: Talk story with you?

RR: Yeah. Come look at how my children and he used to talk to the kids, "I used to carry your mother without diaper," and all da kine, he used to tell, to the kids. When they grow up, they tell, "Ma, how come the Haole man every time come?"

So I tell, "You guys gotta call him Tūtū."

They tell, "How come?"

I tell, "Him used to take care us when us was small."

Every time us run away from him, no, he catch up. No more clothes, every time go swimming, and we know they coming around, we hide, you

know, we go swimming. But come out from the water, we watching where they going, we run home. We like go reach home the house, no can, because they stay, they know. He know that we all going run away from him and he waiting, you know. So when we come home, we look, nobody, we run, come home by the shower side. Hurry up, go by the shower. But he know, he come by the house he tell, just then we was coming out, catch all us. He used to tell us . . .

MM: Just in fun kind?

RR: Yeah, in fun kind for catch us. That's why we tell, ho, this old man. When I had my children, he come every . . . That's why people like know, why he come to my house. So I told 'em. And he used to tell Daddy, "I used to take care your wife when she was small." But down there, they used to run, hide. The time we stay Kahalepalaoa, we run, hide inside the mosquito net. We go hide, then we go peek. Then he know, he tell come--he tell Tūtū them "Where all the kamali'i went."

"Everybody stay all hiding."

He said, "Yeah, I know they all hiding." Come inside, he go look. Then he know who go stay inside the mosquito net. He just come over there, he pull the mosquito net like this, all us, no can do nothing, everybody stay standing by the parlor just (chuckles) hiding. Then he said, "No, no. Come, come, come."

MM: So when he talked to you folks, he talked to you in Hawaiian?

RR: Yeah, and in English. But to the kids, he tell the kids, "You know, I used to take care your mother. No more panty on and all that. That's all right, I just come here to check how is she. She's doing fine and taking care nice of you." All da kine. Then pau, then he go. I tell him I go make coffee for him. He said, "No, thank you," now he going and it's time for him he go home, he going change and whatever, because they perspire from walking, yeah. He wen change everything, then he going by the stable, then if he have to go with the workingmen, then he go. So I tell, "Oh, you gotta come my house." He go early that's why. When all the working guys go, but he go first. He go take his walk first, he come back. Then when he going ride his horse. Or not he going on top his old Ford. The Ford he get, that's only for the dogs. He no take anybody.

MM: (Chuckles) He just take the dogs?

RR: Yeah, the dog. Even if you going far place, the dogs going work with the workers, he going over there pick 'em up.

MM: Drop off the dogs?

RR: Yeah. And if he not the one drive, whoever going drive, Kauakahi or somebody, he tell, take da kine and drop the dogs by the pen.

MM: What kind of dogs were they?

RR: Oh, some hunting dogs, some da kine poi dog, they train 'em how to go get the cows, all da kine. Daddy used to have, then when we used to have, and then tell Daddy each one for go take. So Daddy used to have two dogs.

MM: They take care the dogs for 'em?

RR: Yeah, if Daddy no more time, then he take 'em home, but most times Daddy bring home so can listen to him, eh? So he bring home. That's why, if he go work and anything happen to him, if Daddy fall down from the horse, we would know--the dog come home.

MM: Oh, so somebody go look for him?

RR: Yeah, then somebody go look for him. The dog come home. That's why I tell him when he working and when he fall off the horse, I don't know, I stay home, eh? And my brother them come tell, "Eh, Ernest wen fall off." And the boss come to me, "Come, we go take you go, go look. I don't know, he's not that bad, but I think he got hurt." Then I go with him, and I go hospital, go look. He tell me, "Later on, I'll send somebody come pick you up, no worry."

I tell, "Oh, okay." Then I talk to Daddy. He tell no, the horse wen jump up and fall on him. He ask me how the people wen know. I said, "Your dog." The dog, that's why everybody know. They never see the horse, but the dog came home.

MM: The dog came home looking for people or. . . .

RR: Yeah. When the dog come home, that's just like coming home look for somebody. Then they come and spin around, then he going back.

MM: Oh, he tries to take 'em back out there?

RR: Yeah. Take 'em back where Daddy stay. Then that's why they know. That's why they take off, they go.

MM: How many times did this happen?

RR: Well, the last time he hurt badly, that's when up at that hill someplace, right up there. They were bringing the cattle in. Then when he went, he tell, his horse just wen jump up like that, never have time and the . . .

MM: So it happened more than once, then?

RR: Yeah. Other times he fall down, but the dogs no come home because he can stand up. This one, he never stand up, that's why. And this one wen hit him hard on top here, that's why, the horse. He never stand up quick enough, so the dog go around him, but the dog came home. Then everybody run, come over, 'cause we live right over

there, they come call me. But I look at them, I tell, "What, he bad?" They tell they don't know. So they took 'em down, then when they come, then the boss come. "Rebecca come, we take you down."

I tell, "I don't know how bad Ernest is."

But the doctor look at me. And he said, "Maybe it's all right, but that's why we take you."

I said, "Gee, I no can go if I going take this baby with me."

He tell me, "No, you can go." He took me down, then he left, then he came back. Then after he send some--one of the working guys come. That's why this Filipino boy, his name is Vincent--everybody think him Hawaiian, you know. Then he came close to us, you know. I tell him, "The people think you Hawaiian."

He laugh, he tell, "I know, because they talk Hawaiian to me and I kind of little bit understand what they telling me. I tell them yes, no, yes, no, but I no can answer them."

I tell him, "Why you no tell?"

But he tell, "No, I no like tell them."

Bumbai afterwards I tell Tūtū them that he's not Hawaiian, he's Filipino, pure Filipino."

"Oh, look Hawaiian."

Tell, "Yeah, but no, he not." But he's nice boy.

So he came and get me. Tell me Ernest go sleep, and then we come home. But in the evening after--if I no come, then Uncle them go or the two brothers and da kine and I no go. So I no go.

MM: That time, the hospital was about how old? Just built?

RR: I think, no, was kind of little bit old. That's the house we get down Maunalei.

MM: Oh, so--did Lāna'i always have a hospital or. . . .

RR: Oh, I think when they, you know, when the time had more people coming, coming, eh?

MM: Oh, when they started to build Lāna'i City?

RR: Yeah, yeah, city. That's when the hospital

MM: They moved the house [i.e., hospital building] from Keōmuku up here?

RR: No, that Maunalei house, from here they wen take 'em down. They

when build . . .

MM: Oh, I see. There was a hospital [in Lāna'i City] and they moved it to Maunalei?

RR: Yeah. They moved. That's why they had, you know, the hospital office, and the make man, the one da kine, that's where you see the dead, all like that [i.e., morgue]. That time I was only small, yeah. And now, they make the hospital by itself and the office by itself.

MM: So around the 1920s, then they had the hospital, they brought a doctor over?

RR: Yeah.

MM: And so you didn't have to go Maui anymore?

RR: No, no more. Everybody go here. And then, well, the time the plantation pau, the sugar plantation pau [in 1901], then they start coming build there--own doctor. 'Cause most times they were going Maui and Gay was most time the doctor. The lady [Louisa Gay] and the man [Charles Gay] was the doctor. They know their business and if you get stomachache, they only give you--shoot you, they call upī [enema] and then they give you all the medicine for clean up. Then after that, they go get their Hawaiian medicine--whatever they get, then they give. So the doctor was over here long time. I think Dr.--what his name?

MM: Wilkinson?

RR: No, no. Before that. Oh, I forget his name already. Nice doctor and that's where Auntie Mahoe [Rebecca Benenua] wen go start work for them. And then that doctor, worked for Hector Munro. Forget his name already. But the doctor was always sick, too. Maybe that's why he wen go transfer out early, and then I think only temporary kind, then Dr. [Richard J.] Wilkinson came in. Because my doctor was Dr. Hoffman. My doctor, he was a young boy, I think he was only in his twenties.

MM: How about--okay, after they put up the hospital, then did you have your babies in the hospital or you had all your babies at home?

RR: I had all home. Well, I didn't know I was going to have that baby [Clarence] right away. I was behind hanging clothes, and my neighbor came . . .

MM: Which baby is that?

RR: Brother [Clarence].

MM: Oh.

RR: And then, was pau school. And then, I went behind go get the clothes, I came inside. So I tell, "Eh, look like going get. . . ." I no can get Daddy, so I told Suki [Mary Ellen Richardson Nakoa, RR's oldest daughter], "Go look for Daddy down there, I going get my baby." But, see, they were going to paint our house. I wen go move everything because the kids all in school during the morning. I move everything, all the big stuff, everything, get ready because the next day they was going come paint. Clean all everything, everything all ready, we go put one room, see. They was going come make room by room. Then I think about one o'clock I felt, oh, boy, I think I going get . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 16-3-2-88

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Rebecca Kaopuiki Richardson (RR)

April 10, 1988

Kō'ele, Lāna'i

BY: Mina Morita (MM)

MM: This is a second interview with Rebecca Richardson for the Kō'ele oral history project, on April 10, 1988 at Kō'ele, Lāna'i. The interviewer is Mina Morita.

Mama, we didn't talk too much about Kō'ele and, you know, about after when you moved to Kō'ele from Keomuku [in 1930]. So when you first moved up here, what did the camp look like?

RR: Yeah, the houses--most da kine.

MM: What kind of buildings had? I guess had the manager's house?

RR: Yeah.

MM: Had the store and the office?

RR: Yeah. Used to be all down there where the stable and all that, all together. Get that--you know, the house way up. Then Uncle William them stay all near. That's all the front, all have, way all down. They park their cars and the horses only. (No cars were allowed in the housing area until later years.)

MM: So did they still have the row of royal palm trees? Was that there?

RR: Yeah. That was there already, long.

MM: How about the big Norfolk pine tree [fronting the manager's home], that was there?

RR: Yeah. All those trees down there, all was there already.

MM: How about the banyan tree?

RR: Was. And in the front, you know, right in the front of the office, they had one small ring where they had all hibiscus [a circular hibiscus hedge]. All the different colors. Hibiscus, but since they wen move, today, no more. They broke 'em all down.

MM: So had office and a store, and right next to it had . . .

RR: The manager's home, the house.

MM: By the big [Norfolk pine] tree?

RR: Mm hmm. And that tree [is still] standing now.

MM: And Mrs. [Helen Jean Stokes] Forbes' house?

RR: Oh, she used to, but she go went already [the Forbes' left Lāna'i in 1928]. When we came here, [Robert] Cockett was taking over already.

MM: So Cockett lived in that [Forbes] house?

RR: Yeah, that house over there. After Cockett went, then Tūtū Man moved in.

MM: Tūtū Man [James] Kauila?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: I see. And then was the church built, yet?

RR: Ah, yeah, after, the [Ka Lōkahi O Ka Mālamalama Ho'omana Na'auao O Hawai'i] Church was built.

MM: About what time?

RR: Gee, that year, I don't know. I don't know, I forget the year the church was built [1930].

MM: Who lived down around by the stables?

RR: Most only the Kwon, the Shin, and Cockett them all was staying this side. Afterward when they brought this camp [houses] in [1937], then they broke down [existing houses in Kō'ele].

MM: The Miki Camp?

RR: Mm hmm, this homes where we staying now.

MM: Mm hmm. Did everybody have a bathroom in their house?

RR: No. Public, outside, public. Everybody get outside. Everybody have their own. Get da kine outside toilet, yeah.

MM: Outhouse?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: Okay. What about for do laundry and stuff like that?

RR: You have one right behind your own house.

MM: I see.

RR: You have place for wash, you have place for boil your clothes.

MM: Mm hmm. So it was after, what, 1937?

RR: Yes. When they start to bring this home [from Miki Camp in 1937]. By '39, then everything was already set.

MM: And that's when you had a community bathroom?

RR: Yeah, everybody have. When they moved this, then they started build all--everybody's.

MM: Who built it?

RR: The company, the Hawaiian Pine Company.

MM: I see.

RR: The only company, eh, the ranch. The ranch people help the workers, certain ones. They pick up certain ones. Most are carpenters.

MM: So, when you folks moved into the houses that they brought from Miki, were those new houses?

RR: No. That was old houses, I think, from Miki. This is old houses, I think.

MM: But when they moved there, about how old were the houses?

RR: I don't know. When I came up here nobody already. Most people went, some people stay. Then little by little they build down the city. So, I don't know. I don't know how old this home. But all came from Miki. Used to be Miki Camp.

MM: So, tell us after you married, what was your typical day like? What time did you have to get up?

RR: Oh, most times about four-thirty because Daddy got to go out early. Four-thirty, and then five o'clock something, then they go.

MM: They start work about five o'clock?

RR: Depends when if they going out for driving (cattle), they go. Not later than that.

MM: And then what did you do?

RR: Well, stay home take care the kids, do my house job. But most times I do sewing or whatever for the kids.

MM: When was your first son born, Ernest [Jr.]?

RR: Thirty-two.

MM: Nineteen thirty-two?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: And then who was born after that?

RR: George.

MM: George.

RR: I think it was year and two months then I had George.

MM: And then--well, tell us about the children, when they were born and what happened.

RR: Mostly I had my children at home. That was so far so good my birth, all da kine, children was all right. But only they took sick that's why.

MM: Mm hmm. So, Ernest [Jr.] is the oldest and then you had George?

RR: Then I had George. Ernest [Jr.], after he was in school for--I think in the fifth grade, then he got sick and we didn't know, was during the wartime. So the doctor send us out to Maui. We took him Maui, then they found out that he had tumor. From there, 1942, send us Honolulu. Forty-two, I think, we were in Honolulu with him. And then we came home then he was all right for another year, then we lost him. He was nine years old, I think. Then I had George, and George was--he was healthy, everything was good, but I left him with Tūtū and then he must have--I don't know what happened, then we rush him to the hospital. Then the following day he just died, I lost him.

MM: What, Tūtū wen hānai him?

RR: No. I do their work for them--she ask me for help her so I helped her. I don't know if he was playing with her in the kitchen, whatever. So I lost him. After a while I was pregnant again and Daddy got to go work down there, we stayed down there [at Keomuku].

MM: How old was George when he died?

RR: He was five--he just about to make five.

MM: Five years old?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: Was accident?

RR: Yeah, accident. I lost four boys.

MM: Okay. After George, then who was born?

RR: After George was Lawrence. Then the fourth one was Timmy, Timothy. Then Suki [Mary Ellen]. After her, then came Tita.

MM: Charlotte?

RR: Mm hmm. Then Sonny [Clarence]. That's all.

MM: I see. And what happened to Lawrence and Timothy?

RR: Lawrence was born [for] about three days, I think, and something was wrong with him. Timothy, well, he was born and I had him at home and then the doctor kept him in the hospital for seven months. Some kind of, I don't know, boil or whatever affected him someplace around here, then we lost him.

MM: From the day he was born, he was in the hospital?

RR: No. About two weeks after, I think, he went hospital.

MM: And they kept him on Lāna'i?

RR: Mm hmm [yes]. Kept him over here. He was doing all right, but only that thing--I don't know, they said something was growing. So we lost him. After that we had Suki and Charlotte and Sonny, that's all. Nothing to do, only take care children. Take care--still had to take care my brothers for do their laundry.

MM: They were still living with you?

RR: Yeah, mm hmm. Until Lindsay wen move from out from the next-door house, then he give us the house, then my brothers stayed there and we stayed here.

MM: Did you folks have to pay rent or anything?

RR: Yeah. That time we had--I think so from the first, I think, when we had this home. But before that, we never pay nothing.

MM: So when you folks moved into the Miki house, you started paying rent?

RR: Pay rent.

MM: When did you get electricity?

RR: Thirty-nine.

MM: Nineteen thirty-nine?

RR: I think '39 or earlier than that.

MM: But it wasn't until you folks moved into the houses . . .

RR: Yeah. When they brought this house up here [from Miki]--this was the first house they brought. And then they have to cut our bedroom in half in order to fit this house in here. So as soon as they put all the homes up, then they start put the lights. Everybody from the bosses, too, and all. Because the bosses all no more light, too. Everybody was using all kerosene.

MM: Before they put the electricity in, was there running water? Did you folks have water?

RR: Yeah. Had water, everything had. Only the light. But the two front houses, maybe the bosses' houses, when they put the electric light in, I think they were the first. Then bumbai, when this camp came out, then they put for this side.

MM: So, your children, which school did they go to?

RR: This school right now.

MM: Where Lāna'i [High and Elementary] School is now?

RR: Yeah.

MM: It was already opened when they started. . . .

RR: Mm hmm. [Lāna'i High and Elementary moved from Kō'ele to its present Lanai City site in 1937.]

MM: How did they used to get to school?

RR: Bus. They start go kindergarten first. From kindergarten then they go to the big school.

MM: Where was the kindergarten?

RR: At the--stay by the [Lāna'i] Baptist Church. You know the Baptist church?

MM: Okay. So they were separated from the big school?

RR: Yeah. When they ready, then they go.

MM: And then, so what time did they have to be out there to catch the bus to school?

RR: Seven-thirty or quarter to eight. Usually the bus come right in the front there.

MM: Then, who drove the bus?

RR: Was this old man, Mr. Niibu.

MM: And that's Hideo Niibu's father?

RR: I think so. That, what you call--yeah, one of the teacher, you know, Mr. Niibu?

MM: Yeah.

RR: I think his father. But he got to go [Kaumalapau] Harbor first, pick up the harbor kids, then come ranch, ranch kids.

MM: I was talking to Mrs. [Kimiko] Nunotani yesterday, and she said that her father . . .

RR: [Kosuke] Okamoto.

MM: Okamoto used to drive, too. So he must have been retired by that time.

RR: I think--yeah, the early part, yeah. The early part. You know, certain times certain guys drive. But most times Niibu, though, pick up.

MM: Did anybody have cars back then?

RR: No, I don't think so. Up here, nobody those days. 'Cause everybody had to walk. But get the bus, everybody catch the bus for go store and they bring you home.

MM: So, did you have to pay for the bus?

RR: No. Nobody pay, just free bus. The time was all under Hawaiian Pine, eh? Everybody can ride, you can go. If you like go ride, go take a ride go [Kaumalapau] Harbor, you can go. Go pick up the guys, come out shopping or whatever.

MM: How many people could the bus hold?

RR: Chee, I don't know.

MM: Mrs. Nunotani called it the "Black Maria."

RR: (Laughs) I guess so.

MM: Was it black?

RR: The bus, yeah. Certain, I think, buses they color that--must be. They call names, yeah, well, us we no bother because he just come, pick. They tell you, "When you like go shopping, the bus going come." Then we all go outside there wait, then go.

MM: So, what other kind get-togethers did you folks have with the

community?

RR: Well, when the children have games or something, then we all go, you know, right in front where the. . . . Well, we had one pool hall, see, for the menfolks or for everybody. Mrs. Anna Shin was the one take care. Then we go there, everybody like play, then they go just play around, fool around, talk story, laugh, and that's all. Evening time when all the workingmens come home, they go there, then we only go watch them, that's all. But every day we be outside with the children. Playground, they're playing ball, always play their volleyball, softball, basketball. That's why my children all was just like their father, play ball. Always playing . . .

MM: When did they build the park for the kids?

RR: Same time when they wen start build everything up here.

MM: Around 1937?

RR: Yeah, everything. Everything for the community, especially for our children. But plenty city children all come up. We no blame them, they come here, but only their parents--they stay up here too late, they go home.

MM: Was there any kind of clubs or anything like that you belonged to?

RR: No, nobody. So far, nobody.

MM: How about church, you folks started?

RR: Oh, yeah, church we have. We also have that kind Sunday-school program, then everybody come in. But other than that, nobody.

MM: So where was the church?

RR: Up here, that Ka Lōkahi [O Ka Mālamalama Ho'omana Na'auao O Hawai'i Church].

MM: And [Robert] Cockett was the [pastor]. . . .

RR: Yeah, Cockett and James Kauila, our Tūtū Man was.

MM: And who used to teach Sunday school?

RR: Mrs. [Rose Kahikiwawe] Cockett used to.

MM: And so everybody that lived up at the ranch went to that church?

RR: Yeah, everybody went. Everybody went.

MM: Even the manager?

RR: No, no. He doesn't come.

- MM: Was there any kind of rules for the camp?
- RR: Well, you got to take care your yard, that's the main thing. But they have yard boy for clean the rest, the park, and all that. And take care the public bath and all da kine. They had somebody to take care that.
- MM: And clean up in the bathroom?
- RR: Yeah, uh huh.
- MM: Who did that?
- RR: One Korean man.
- MM: Remember his name?
- RR: Hmm, what his name?
- MM: That So?
- RR: No, no, not So, somebody else. Used to take care, take care the yard, so we always tell the kids not to throw their papers around. 'Cause he come around, he go clean, go pick up, eh? We used to take care, we used to be clean. Everybody take care.
- MM: It looked like the houses were all nicely set up and there were hedges . . .
- RR: Fence, they make fence all around. Each yard get their own fence. And then get plenty hedges around.
- MM: What kind of hedges?
- RR: Hibiscus.
- MM: What kind of flowers and stuff did you have growing in the yard?
- RR: Those days, we had mostly 'ākulikuli. Every ranch house you go, all have 'ākulikuli. Maybe a few other kind like geranium, everybody like roses, they put plenty in their yard. But mostly it's all 'ākulikuli all around.
- MM: So everybody took good care of their yards?
- RR: Mm hmm.
- MM: What happened if you didn't take care of your yard?
- RR: Nothing. That's your own fault. Nobody going come clean, you have to clean yourself.
- MM: No, but, did you get scolding from the manager?

- RR: No, no. Nobody no scold. That's only you, your own self, you had to take care. He no come around. He hardly come around.
- MM: How about [Harold] Blomfield-Brown. Did he used to come around?
- RR: No. Well, the time I came up here, he wasn't here--he was, but he no come around here. But up here, especially the Ranch Camp, he no come. But he's in the city, in the city, yeah.
- MM: So were you folks scared of him, too (chuckles)?
- RR: No. That time I never marry yet. Well, we hardly go down, only when we go to the movie or go basketball, the games, that's all but. During daytime, I hardly go. I'm home.
- MM: Well, so, was there any other rules?
- RR: With us, up here, the ranch, nothing. Only you had to take care your own yard.
- MM: Did you have to go sleep by certain time or . . .
- RR: No.
- MM: . . . no make noise by certain time or anything like that?
- RR: No. They no bother you, that's your business. You do your own, your home. Everybody on their own. Going their own house, nobody bother.
- MM: How about--let me see, how about school activities for the kids? You folks used to go down?
- RR: No. The kids go. I hardly go with them 'cause I'm home, they go. But we may tell them certain time you pau, then they come. But the coaches was good, that's why, they know. Tell them do your job [i.e., chores] first before you come, then they go. So they always do their job, then they go.
- MM: What about--it seems like in some of the old pictures, a lot of people played music back then. Who was all these different groups and who did they play for?
- RR: Well, when they have program in the gym or something, then they call. Mostly, oh, well, family kind. My brothers, my nieces, their husband. So all of them. But after work, most of them stay over here. The ones no married, they all get together, go play music. Sometime they sit outside here by the open just talking story, play music. And afterward, they all go home. 'Cause my brother folks had their own house, everybody go. Everybody go there 'cause they single, yeah. But weekends, well, they figure Saturday no work, then everybody . . .

MM: They did this every night or just Saturday nights?

RR: Once in a while in the weekdays if not too da kine. They home early, then they play. Somebody have music by their house and they all get together or get over there by the bath, the public bath, and then everybody talk and then they play music there. They talk story, then they play music maybe before ten o'clock, then they all go. But if weekend, most times till one or two o'clock in the morning. Play music, they have fun. Good old days, nobody make trouble, one another.

MM: That was--didn't have TV back then?

RR: No TV.

MM: How about radio? Anybody had radio?

RR: No radio. We had, but you have to run by battery. So we--no more time for go. . . . But when we go down country, yeah, we have down there.

MM: Down. . . .

RR: Keōmuku side.

MM: Keōmuku. Mm hmm.

RR: But over here, no, we no bring. We get phonograph, that's what we had.

MM: How did you run the phonograph?

RR: Crank, crank.

MM: Mm hmm. And what kind of music did you listen to?

RR: All the Hawaiian records. If somebody go outside island and they get, they buy, they come home and they play.

MM: Mm hmm. I see.

RR: We had one, was just--well, not real long ago maybe, I think. Daddy throw 'em all away inside the rubbish.

MM: Oh, and the records, too?

RR: I don't know if the records went. I don't know, it might be still in the back or he threw away, I don't know.

MM: I'll go ask him.

RR: I think it's in the back because--I don't know if still there. Only I have Tita's, Charlotte's ones stay in there.

MM: How about--after they closed the company store up the ranch, then you used to have to go shopping down the city?

RR: Yeah. Everybody go down the city.

MM: So you catch bus?

RR: Yeah. Or not, the workingman, if I no go, maybe Daddy go with the workingmen. They have the truck for take everybody go shop.

MM: Uh huh. And how often did they used to go?

RR: Well, those days, I think only Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

MM: Mm hmm. And what kind of stuff did you buy at the store? Did you have to buy your meat then?

RR: Yeah. If you like something, you buy there. Or can goods, or something like that. And the clothing kind, whatever you want. Other than that, well, that's all. Most times was meat from--Daddy work at the slaughterhouse, so no need that much, eh?

MM: Mm hmm, mm, hmm. But what about stuff like butter or . . .

RR: Yeah, you buy from the store.

MM: And where did that used to come from?

RR: I don't know if--maybe from outside, I think, from outside island.

MM: How did they bring it in?

RR: Through the boat. The boat bring all the stuff.

MM: From Honolulu or from Maui?

RR: I think most from Honolulu, I think.

MM: 'Cause the [Kaumalapau] Harbor was already built?

RR: Yeah, it's already built. When we came up here, was started already. But mostly [goods] they come Mānele. If Tūtū Papa [Daniel Kaopuiki, Sr.] the one, it's Mānele. If he go get stuff from Lahaina, it's Mānele. The mail, he take mail from over here, he go Mānele.

MM: When they put the electricity in, did you have a refrigerator?

RR: Mm, not right away. Maybe take about after a year, I think, then we start to have. I didn't buy my own, my brother gave me.

MM: At any time, did you have an icebox?

RR: No, not that. Then my brother gave me his icebox. Then my brothers were working all in the [pineapple] field, then--just then the war [World War II] break out. Then they bought me washing machine. I was the only one have washing machine. I couldn't take 'em down to da kine, I have to do something. That's why Daddy them wen build that little house behind there, that shack.

MM: To put your washing machine inside?

RR: They put the washing machine in there because I couldn't take down there 'cause not nice, eh? If this was public, then everybody. But I have my family. And then my niece was staying and she have children. Then she tell me, "Aunty, I can use?"

I tell, "Oh, okay."

So everybody use my--only us family. My brothers and my niece every time she come, tell, "Aunty, can we use your washer?"

I tell, "Oh, okay." So they come once a week, they make plenty clothes. When only have little bit, then they go wash by hand.

MM: I see. So weren't you folks the first one to have television, too?

RR: Yeah. We were the first, that's right. We were the first and everybody came here.

MM: What year was that?

RR: Oh, forgot already. Everybody went out already [i.e., moved away from the ranch]. And that's the first TV we had. Came from Richard's Shopping Center and bring 'em. I think the TV is still in [O'ahu] at Tita's house.

MM: So now, instead of playing music nighttime, everybody watch TV?

RR: Most times, but not me. Only once when somebody call me, there's something going on, then I go. Most times I get the radio.

MM: But everybody in this camp used to come here and watch TV?

RR: Yeah, when we had, then everybody come. That year had this Hawaiian program was played by Genoa Keawe [on TV]. So everybody come every Sunday, full house. Everybody come.

MM: How did everybody fit in the room?

RR: We all sit down, all everybody on the floor. Soon as the program over, they all go home.

MM: So about how many people used to come and watch?

RR: Oh, I don't know, plenty. All the family come. Some come with

their children, the children tired, they all sleeping. Mostly the program start about maybe six o'clock or seven. Everybody come early, sit here. By the time the program start, the kids come tired, go sleep already. Program close about nine o'clock, then pau. Everybody stand up and go home.

MM: So, let me see, what kind of kaukau did you cook for your family?

RR: Oh, whatever.

MM: You got your meats from the ranch?

RR: Mm hmm.

MM: And then, what about vegetables and stuff like that? Where did you get that from?

RR: We had to go store and buy.

MM: So you could buy it in Lāna'i City?

RR: Yeah. In the city can buy from Lāna'i stores.

MM: Did you folks grow anything up here?

RR: Not vegetables. 'Cause the [Hawaiian Pineapple] Company had their vegetable garden down there.

MM: Down where?

RR: Down there, right down there by the nursery, across.

MM: Oh, so, they raise their own vegetables on Lāna'i?

RR: On Lāna'i. And then used to get a Pāke Camp, yeah. Those Chinese guys they wen make--each one they plant their garden.

MM: So you could buy from them?

RR: You could buy from them, but if they see you, they give you.

MM: So Hawaiian Pine had their own vegetable gardens and then they sold the vegetables to the store?

RR: I think so, something, because they had all over here. No, I think most for the boardinghouse. 'Cause the boardinghouse, they cook, yeah, for everybody [the pineapple workers]. So they supply the boardinghouse. Maybe whatever left over they sell to the store, but I don't know. Mostly it's for the boardinghouse. This boardinghouse, get the Chinese boardinghouse, Korean boardinghouse, get the Hawaiian boardinghouse, and the . . .

MM: All in different areas [in Lāna'i City]?

RR: All different areas. All different areas. The Korean boardinghouse, that's the one right down here. The Chinese one, that's where all this--Sakuma them, that block everybody staying. That's Chinese boardinghouse, that. Then the Hawaiian boardinghouse way down.

MM: Down where?

RR: Where the American Legion [hall] is. That's where all the Hawaiians. And way up by--where now? Someplace by Auntie Mahoe [Rebecca Benenua] them block wen stay that big boardinghouse, over there. Each one, everybody had different. The Hawaiians, they had their own boardinghouse. They had their own cook. Korean, those days they no mix up with Japanese. They have their own, they no mix up, you know.

MM: About what year was this?

RR: Maybe before I came up here was already had.

MM: Around 1928, '29?

RR: Maybe.

MM: And how long did that last?

RR: Until was slack off with job, I think. (Workers got laid off.) Most guys went away (from Lana'i).

MM: About what time was that?

RR: I think when the war wen break. Most time they stay take down. You know, the Japanese and then everybody go. Take all the boys go service.

MM: And that [boardinghouses] was just for the single men?

RR: The single men. But the married--the parents maybe stay here because they take their children, bumbai they look, no, no more job for them, da kine supervisor job. So they move, they go other place, other island, go look job. So little by little, they move out. Most of them move out from Lana'i. But lot of old Japanese, Korean. Korean, lots.

MM: They stayed and retired here?

RR: No, some of them not, I think, they just went. Because you know when you work supervisor, yeah, and then they put you with the other jobs. They no like, they go other island go look for another over there. But most of them all move away from Lana'i.

MM: How come they didn't have enough jobs here?

RR: Maybe--you know how it is, people no like go pick pineapple. Same old thing, year around, year around, you got to go. Those days no more like now, get machine, eh? Those days, they had to go hand carry. Put [the pineapple] in the bag and carry, then get the box, pack up in the box, then load 'em on the truck. So the supervisor, well, they go away.

MM: Did they cut down the [production of] pineapple or anything?

RR: Not exactly. Pineapple was still there, but maybe because, you know, when you get da kine office kind job, you no like come down go way down. So you might as well go someplace else look for better kind. Lot of them went away. Most plenty Koreans, many Koreans went away (i.e., supervisors and office workers were offered lower wages and jobs working out in the fields. They didn't want the demotion and left.)

MM: Seem like, if you look at the old pictures, they had lots of different kinds of clubs. They had like a Korean club, a Puerto Rican club . . .

RR: Filipino. Over here the Filipinos, they had their own club. They were strong. They get their own band. Any program, anything for do with program, they always there. Plenty, but now, no more, Lāna'i. Only certain guys still here. Maybe one or two you can find, but the rest all no more, all gone already. (Most of the old-timers are gone.)

MM: Did you folks ever get together with the rest of Lāna'i City for . . .

RR: No. No, we stay our own, we stay home up this side [Kō'ele] ourself. Only when we have party we get together. But mostly only ranch [people], not with anybody.

MM: After you moved up here, did you go back to Keōmuku side a lot?

RR: Yeah, I stayed down there because Daddy had to go work down, so we stayed down there.

MM: Where did you stay?

RR: With Tūtū them. Stay down there maybe about six months and then slack off the job, then me and him come home.

MM: About what year was that, at what time? When you first got married or later on?

RR: Later on. After I had Lawrence, I think, then we stayed there.

MM: How come he [husband Ernest Richardson] had to go Keōmuku side work?

RR: They wen go send him help Tūtū Papa [Daniel Kaopuiki, Sr.], so

he. . . .

MM: Do what kind work?

RR: The cow, the water go check, then the rest, well, the other guys come down. Just for that time, maybe about six months, then we come back.

MM: At that time, was there still a lot of people living down Keōmuku or how many . . .

RR: No, not too much. Everybody was leaving, going. Only the Filipino--nobody, not too much. Only had one--only the old folks, the [Kauhane] Kukoloua, that Joe Kahaleanu them grandmother and grandfather, that's all, nobody else. Get other guys but Filipino, that old Filipino. You have one or two.

MM: What did they do?

RR: They go fishing . . .

MM: So they were already retired?

RR: Nah, they come from over here. They no like work this kind job, they go down, they go ask. They like go stay someplace land. And then they rent 'em out, stay there, take care the place.

MM: I see. So, only had . . .

RR: Most time it's da kine company place, they ask, eh, for lease and they go.

MM: I see.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

RR: That's all already, nothing you get.

MM: Okay. So had couple Filipino people, had Tūtū Mama and Tūtū Papa, Koku, what's her name? [Hannah] Kukoloua . . .

RR: Kukoloua.

MM: And then who else?

RR: Nobody.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MM: So, when did--who were the last people that lived down Keōmuku side?

RR: Only Tūtū them and that Joe them grandmother [Hannah Kukoloua]. After the grandfather died, only the grandmother stayed.

MM: She stayed by herself?

RR: She stayed by herself but most times she stay with Tūtū them. Maybe after a year--maybe almost two year, I think, or going three year, somebody came along and then she had companion. So she stayed with that person until she died.

MM: About when did she die?

RR: Chee, I don't know what year she died.

MM: In the '50s?

RR: Yeah. In the '50s. No, I think just about the 60s, I think.

MM: So she was the last one to live down there?

RR: Yeah.

MM: And then, what year did Tūtū Mama and Tūtū Papa move up to the city?

RR: Hmm, '51. When the ranch close, then by the time everything settled, I think he [Daniel Kaopuiki, Sr.] came up. . . . Before--I wonder if was in '49. I don't know if was '49. But he got to come back and go continue work with the company. So no more da kine supervisor job, so they wen take him go pineapple. He wen go pick pineapple maybe, I don't know, for two week. I thought, "Ey, my father no can, he's old already." Then they go da kine [pick] slips, bolohead kind. Maybe he never work for about a month, I think, then they put him go in the camp with the other guys work take care at the park, Dole Park, used to. And then he used to go with them . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MM: Okay, he had to work for little while before he could retire?

RR: Yeah, retire.

MM: So he just did any kind of work that was available?

RR: Yeah, was available. So mostly he work with the guys who are more like, what you call that, hō hana kind, yeah. Stay inside with them, take care park, and go around by the camp area. Until he retired.

MM: When did he--you remember what year he retired?

RR: I not too sure.

MM: Or how old he was?

RR: I think when he made seventy-five, I think.

MM: He retired, that old?

RR: Yeah, because the time with the company--with ranch time, yeah, can work, you know, they can work, yet, eh?

MM: Didn't have social security at that time?

RR: No, no. Never had until we came here. Then after he retire, then about two, three years after, I think, then they had social security.

MM: When did you start working the pineapple fields?

RR: Me?

MM: Uh huh.

RR: [Nineteen] fifty-six when I start. Everybody [RR's children] all out of school, eh? Only Brother wen start work, too, same time. So I started work with him, same time with him.

MM: Oh, you mean when he went to work during the summer?

RR: Yeah, the summer then I work with him. And I worked till '76 and retire.

MM: So when you first started in the pineapple field, what kind of job did you do?

RR: Pick pineapple. Pick pineapple. For the first time it's pretty hard, but after you get used to, you can. That's all. That's the only job, pineapple.

MM: Did you enjoy it?

RR: Oh, yes . . .

MM: Those twenty years you worked?

RR: Was really something to learn and enjoy because our gang that we worked with. . . . We started to work, everybody first beginning. That's why we really lucky.

MM: Oh, so, all the ladies that you worked with all started at the same time?

RR: All started same time. All . . .

MM: Were they young or were they like you who had children that were

already grown up?

RR: Yeah, they had children all grown up. And everybody start to go work.

MM: And did you work with the same women for the . . .

RR: For the last, yeah, until I retire.

MM: Who were some of the ladies?

RR: Mrs. Garalde, Mrs. Fernandez . . .

MM: Elsie?

RR: Mm hmm. Mrs. Matsuura, Mrs. Oda, Mrs. Del Rosario. . . . But then, lot of them, they work ahead of us, then. . . .

MM: Then they came and joined your gang?

RR: No. Then we had to go in one gang and work with the Aunty Eva, Elaine, Rabang, Ohashi. Mary Shin, and what you call, Ayako, Okamitsu. A lot them, plenty. Got to get fifteen in a gang, yeah. And after a while, one by one quit. They never wait for retirement. When everybody pau, they quit, they got to do this, do that. So only me, I stayed back, then only I retire. I worked with Mrs. Matsuura, Mrs. Oda, Mrs. Del Rosario, and lot of new ones came in. And had Mrs. Zaan, had Mrs. Okazaki, had Mrs. Suzuki. Filipino had Mrs. Hubin. Mrs. Oyama. . . . I don't remember the rest. So we worked until I retire. But Mrs. Matsuura didn't work until she retire. She got sick and then she couldn't come work, she stayed home, she didn't come continue. Then the rest. But they all not here, they all died already.

MM: Okay.

RR: Plenty. But the longest I work with my--I think Mrs. Oda and Mrs. Del Rosario. So Mrs. Oda and me just like we two sisters. And Mrs. Matsuura, we--all us--we all, we the beginners, but we all stick together with Mrs. Del Rosario. But we had a nice crew, but really everybody work together.

MM: So, now, you know, after you retired . . .

RR: Take care grandchildren. (Chuckles) Then baby-sit those people. I can baby-sit how many. Most Haole. I baby-sit for Robin Kaye, I baby-sit for Bob Hera, I baby-sit for--what her name, Kathy? Kathy, the one was working up the hotel with you folks?

MM: Brindo-Vas.

RR: Mm. Her. Then I had yours, bumbai had Evan. Now get the Evans.

MM: Now, you've been in this house for how many years?

RR: About sixty [fifty-one years].

MM: Sixty years.

RR: About sixty year.

MM: You're getting ready to move?

RR: I don't know. They break my heart, moving, oh. I love this home so much and then--I don't know. Just wait and see how things going be. So now everybody say, I wonder if the yard [of RR's new home] is big that we all can come home and camp just like how we camp up there. I don't know.

MM: Ah, look like got plenty room.

RR: See, I don't go out there look.

MM: At the new house?

RR: I don't go out get nosy. They tell me nosy, so I don't. I just stay away. Just play by ear how things is going.

MM: But at least you can stay in the same area, huh?

RR: Yeah. But not the same house, eh? In the same area, but not the same house. So everybody came--this last time everybody came here. This was so surprising. We never hear Albert [Morita] say something. This time he came here, he introduced his friend. Chee, even Grandpa them was shock. Never did he say something. I told them, "This boy is always like that." So I tell, "Now you folks all hear him talking." Because they know we going move. I said, "This is the home that everybody came to stay." But what can we do? Everybody was so shocked when we heard him saying that. Then I said, "When you came in?"

He tell, "I supposed to be here more first than her [Mina Morita]."

I tell him, "No, you big already, you can go school," I said, "you went home, so I got to take care her."

And he laugh. "No, her go be the one every time come home."

I tell, "Yeah. But you can come but." So he come. So they always say, "This is our home, so what can I do."

MM: How do you feel about all the changes that are happening? With the hotels being built, you know, from--compared to what life used to be for you folks?

RR: We don't know. We just looking and watching what's going to happen,

that's the thing. It's not something to do with the hotel, but it's just that [there is] nothing so you can tell this used to be the ranch. Nothing. Nothing to show. No fence, no more all the old things. At least if they had something to remember by, then you would know. But when you got two old junk house--the two old junk house more old than this house. I don't know how come they put there.

MM: Looks like they taking off all the old wood and rebuilding, so.

RR: Why they no start to rebuild instead of patching, patching. But that's their business, we have nothing to do.

MM: So the saddest part for you is that there's nothing to remember the ranch by?

RR: Yes. The saddest part is nothing, nothing to remember by.

MM: Mm hmm. Did you feel the same way when Keōmuku closed down when everybody . . .

RR: Yes. When everybody left, nothing.

MM: So this is happening to you twice?

RR: Mm hmm. Now it's happening again. I never go down, you know, this other side for long time. Maybe--how many year now, maybe over three or four years.

MM: What, Keōmuku side?

RR: I didn't go. Only hear people say a lot, they clean over here, they clean there, they clean there, but I never been down. I hardly go. I'm always over here. Maybe someday, so, go down to visit and see how the place. Right now it's nothing to remember how our ranch used to be.

MM: So was that a good period in your life when you used to--when the ranch was open?

RR: Yes! You know where people was, you know what they do, what they were doing. You can remember all those things, but today . . .

MM: Was it a good life for you folks?

RR: Oh, yes! Today you have to watch people, you don't know who people. Lot of strangers, though. Maybe from now I cannot stay by myself, usually Daddy go Honolulu. When family kind, Daddy go, I'm home alone. I could stay home myself but now days, ho, boy, I don't know, you got to to be afraid of the live people, not the dead people. But we don't know what's going to happen, so, we just play by ear.

MM: What other things do you remember about Kō'ele ranch that was special, that made it special?

RR: I would say like--for myself, I take care all my brothers, my family. When we had gathers together, we all together. All my family, my brothers, my sisters, we always together. Not one time you go do this, you do that. When there's something going, we always together. Okay, what I have to do? I tell, "Why, you do this, you do this." So we've always been together. That's how my father taught us, our parents taught us. But my father always tell me, "You being the oldest of the girls, you take care all your brothers."

So I told, "Oh, okay." I just take care of them. But until today, we always together. We never did tell no, we have something else. We always together. It's the most important thing. Then you [i.e., RR hanaied Mina Morita] in our life, you just like our own, we take everyone. That's why today, I would say, Daddy and I have plenty hanai children. We get Filipino, Japanese, Haole, all different nation. They all come over here, "You like hanai me?"

I said, "No."

"Why?"

I tell, "You too big, you know, you go on your own."

"No, we like come back."

"No, you go on your own."

There's lot of them. A lot of Haoles come over here. They only good friend with me and then they tell, "You like adopt me?"

"No, you all big already."

"No, we like come back over here."

So when things wen happen here, our Haole friends come and tell me, "Aunty, you want help, we help you."

I said, "No." I tell, "We can, we just play by ear and see how things." So I said, "We have all you folks." But we happy we have all the grandchildren, all every year. That's the main thing we have, we are happy. At least Daddy and I happy to have our grandchildren, raise them up, and then now we get great-grand, eight great-grand. Three girls, and the rest all boys. We lucky. We only pray the good Lord, He the one take care, eh? With all you folks--with you and your children. That's all we look forward to, help one another. Today we so thankful to have everybody. So they all come home, they say, "This is our home."

I tell "Oh, up to you folks."

MM: You feel sad because you cannot buy property in this area?

RR: Yes, we wanted to in the beginning when they was selling to the employees. We ask how many times when we were working. They say no, they give you all the runaround, this no more, this county road, no more this, no more that, ah, give up. But we rather have here [Kō'ele] because it's, you know, more convenient for us. It's more--nobody bother.

MM: You never wanted to move down Lāna'i City?

RR: No, I rather stay here where it's more. . . . You can do things without anybody telling, "You cannot do this, you cannot do that." Just like now we just like nobody. They just tell you get out, you get out. We just playing by ear, for how long more, so we just wait. But I know all my children all coming home. They said, "We wait, the day coming we all coming home."

I tell, "Oh, up to you folks."

MM: To help you move?

RR: No, they said to help and to celebrate for the last time. So when going be that day, we just wait, play by ear.

Well, that's all to it, so thank you for this interview. May the good Lord take care you and your family. Whatever you doing, you, your strength, take care you. But be careful, always be careful. Watch what you doing.

MM: Okay.

RR: Mm hmm.

END OF INTERVIEW

LĀNA'I RANCH

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